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ABSTRACT

This paper reports qualitative and quantitative data obtained about relationships between 27 students with special language needs or learning disabilities and their nondisabled peers (N=99) in four integrated eighth grade classes of an urban middle school in Massachusetts. The study involved approximately 120 hours of in-school observation over a 7-month period; structured and informal interviews with students, teachers, and school administrators; and a student-generated typology of the peer system. Primary findings included: (1) the students with language/learning disabilities were perceived humanistically by their peers, and were almost entirely integrated into peer groups; (2) though the bilingual students tended to stay in their own gender-specific peer groups, there was less conflict with regular education students than seen in previous years; (3) gender was found to be a more important predictor of peer social groups than primary language, ability, or ethnic origin. Findings suggested that teacher-constructed notions of inclusion (primarily prescriptive groupings and classroom statements supportive of mutual respect of individual differences) affected student perceptions of and relationships with unlike peers. Fieldnotes and interview data describe student interaction in three different school contexts: (1) the inclusive classroom; (2) the non-inclusive classroom, the hallway, and recess; and (3) lunch. The student-developed typology of the school's peer system is discussed. (Contains 31 references.) (DB)

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RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MAINSTREAMED SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS AND THEIR PEERS IN AN URBAN MIDDLE SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This paper reports qualitative and quantitative data on relationships between special needs students and their peers on a mainstreamed team in an urban middle school. The study is informed by developmental and self psychology perspectives on the role of pubertal, affective, and cognitive factors in group identity formation during Western adolescence; and by educational models designed to foster peer sociality in the classroom. The research explores the perceptions held by Learning and Language Disabled (LLD), Bilingual Program, and regular education students of each other; and examines the extent to which the LLD and Bilingual students were integrated into the team's peer groups. The study also reports on how teacher-constructed notions of inclusion mediated these relationships. The study is based on approximately 120 hours of in-school observation over a seven-month period; structured and informal interviews with students, teachers, and school administrators; and a student-generated typology of the team's peer system.

Primary findings include: 1) the LLD students were perceived humanistically by their peers, and were almost entirely integrated into peer groups; 2) though the Bilingual students tended to stay in their own gender-specific peer groups, they had none of the fights with the regular education students which had characterized relations between the two groups over the three previous years; and finally 3), gender was found to be a more important predictor of peer sociality than primary language, ability, or ethnic origin. These findings seem to suggest that teacher-constructed notions of inclusion (primarily prescriptive groupings and classroom statements supportive of mutual respect of individual differences) affected student perceptions of and relationships with unlike peers.

Introduction

This paper reports qualitative and quantitative data on relationships between mainstreamed Learning and Language Disabled (LLD), Bilingual Program, and regular education students on a heterogeneously-grouped team in an urban middle school. It examines perceptions these different groups of students hold about each other, and ascertains the extent to which special needs students are integrated into peer groups on the team. As such, the study investigates the salience of ability and primary language in relation to other factors of peer group membership such as gender and ethnic origin. The paper also describes how inclusive instructional environments and teaching practices may have affected these relationships. This research is a component of the evaluation conducted by the University of Massachusetts of the Restructuring Schools for the Integration of All Students project -- a five-year grant program involving seven Massachusetts school districts.

The paper is organized into several sections. First, it reviews theoretical and empirical research which frame the study. Second, it offers brief descriptions of the research's objectives, methods, and setting. Third, it describes the study team's teachers and the mainstreaming model they employed, then gives more detailed descriptions of how their plans were put into practice. Fourth, it presents descriptive data concerning student interaction in, and responses to their mainstreamed classrooms, which is followed by a discussion of student social life in other classes, the hallway, at recess, and at lunch. Finally, a composite of seven student-generated typologies of the team's peer system is presented and elaborated with general interview data. It will be seen that the LLD students were almost entirely integrated into peer groups on the team, and that although the Bilingual students tended to maintain their own groups, the physical conflict which had characterized

Bilingual-regular education relations in previous years was almost entirely absent.

Western adolescence, peer relations, and mainstreaming

The power of the adolescent peer group as a socializing force has been well documented in the last few decades. Recent research has indicated that it is especially potent in cultural contexts in which there is a high degree of extrusion from the home -- a frequent phenomenon in Western industrial nations (Schlegel and Barry 1991). Psychogenic and cultural factors in these contexts appear to make individuals particularly disposed towards peers in early adolescence: pubertal and cognitive changes during this time contribute to fluctuations in affect states and a vulnerability to shame phenomena (Schave and Schave 1987; Morrison 1989). This vulnerability seems to be mitigated by the formation of strong attachments to peers with like characteristics (age, gender, ethnic origin, ability, primary language, interests) (Fiske 1974; Demerath 1992). Newman and Newman (1976) proposed that this period, with its defining challenge of group identity versus alienation, be added to Erikson's (1968) eight-part lifespan typology.

This perspective illuminates findings that peer influence is an important predictor of secondary school success in North America. Researchers have found that peer relations support self-esteem, especially across the transition from elementary to junior high school (Simmons, Rosenberg, and Rosenberg 1973; Simmons and Blyth 1987; Hirsch and Dubois 1991; Wigfield, Eccles et al 1991), influence attitudes towards school (Coleman 1961; Smith 1990; Brown and Steinberg 1991), and predict academic achievement and aspirations (Walberg 1980; Ide, Parkerson, Haertel et al 1981; Steinberg 1990).

Partially in response to this body of research, educators in recent years have attempted to develop instructional environments and techniques which facilitate interaction between peers, especially in heterogeneous and mainstreamed contexts. These arrangements include support networks for teachers (Stainback and Stainback 1989), teaming (Glasser 1986; Vandercool and York 1990), cooperative learning (Slavin 1983; Sapon-Shevin 1990), peer-tutoring (Gartner and Lipsky 1990), and teacher-facilitated peer support (Stainback and Stainback 1990). Few studies have examined students' responses to these adapted learning environments. However, a questionnaire and interview study conducted in Britain for example, found that adolescents from an integrated school were more likely than those from a non-integrated school to think that their physically handicapped peers were intelligent, friendly, capable, and approachable (Gillies and Shackley 1988). This study attempts to contribute longitudinal observational and interview data to this body of research concerned with student responses to integrated learning environments.

Objectives

This research has three primary objectives:

1) To describe perceptions which LLD, Bilingual, and regular education students held about each other.

2) To describe interaction between LLD, Bilingual and regular education students, and to ascertain the extent to which the special needs students were integrated into peer groups.

3) To study teachers' and administrators' efforts to construct an inclusive culture in the school, and to attempt to make general determinations concerning the effectiveness of these

efforts.

Methods

The study is based on three sets of data: 1) Approximately 120 hours of observation conducted over a seven month period of teacher practice and student interaction in classes, hallways, and at lunch and recess; 2) Structured and informal interviews with all of the teachers, and selected students on the team (including 16 group interviews of 2-5 students); and seven typologies of the team's peer system, generated by students using a modified Social Type Rating (STR) scale (Schwendinger and Schwendinger 1985; Brown 1993).

Observational and interview data were analyzed with the use of domain analysis (Pelto and Pelto 1978; Spradley 1980). The STR data were synthesized into a composite typology of the team's peer system.

Setting

The study was conducted in a middle school in Midway, a city of approximately 150,000 in the northeastern United States. The city itself had experienced considerable financial distress over the last decade, and at the time of the study was considering a proposal to allow riverboat gambling in order to increase municipal revenues.

The school district's per-pupil expenditures for the 1993-94 school year were $3800; $1700 below the minimum foundation level established by the state educational reform law passed in 1993. The district serves a student population of approximately 24,000. Student ethnic origin is roughly equal thirds African-American, Latino (primarily Puerto Rican), and

Anglo. There is a small Asian American population.

Though the reform law mandated a shift in decision-making in selected domains to the schools, there was little evidence to suggest these changes had begun in earnest. The superintendent, described warmly by some teachers as a "little Prussian," or "fucking dictator," could be said to employ an authoritarian leadership style. Teacher empowerment was a serious issue in Midway.

Built in 1957, Silas Middle School was 80% original equipment at the time of the study. Oriented around a central sloping courtyard which for years had been overgrown with brush, the school had three floors of classrooms, a large auditorium, metal and wood shops, two large cafeterias with original swivel-out wooden stools, a gym, and a pool which was frequently out of commission due to problems with its filter. The long corrugated iron awning over the school bus drop-off point had a pronounced dip in it, suggestive of an earthquake which never happened.

Bob Douglas, the principal of Silas for the last 8 years, arrived at the school as a science teacher in 1969, and served as assistant principal from 1979-86. An ex-military officer, he brought much of the order, discipline and lexicon of the armed forces to his school. Classes passing in the hall did so more or less in single file, and there was a well-enforced pass system. In his morning announcements, he explicated each day in the rotating schedule by referring to its appropriate moniker: "A as in Alpha," "D as in Delta," etc. Many of the teachers called him "Colonel." Bob Douglas was supportive of inclusive efforts in his school, and throughout the study period made frequent statements concerning the importance of breaking down attitudes which students hold about students who differ from

them, and realizing that "everyone is good at something."

The faculty at Silas were on average extremely experienced. At one point during the 1980s the school went nine years with only a single turnover of a teaching position. The teachers were approximately three quarters Anglo, and one quarter African-American and Latino. The school went to a teaming format in 1988, which, according to many teachers, resulted in a fragmentation of the faculty into cliques which occasionally became antagonistic over issues such as paper scarcity.

The faculty had seen numerous changes in the school's programs over the last 12 years. In the 1980s a variety of after-school sports were offered for boys and girls. In 1993-94, teacher contracts in Midway included no extra-curricular responsibilities, and though a few teachers were paid a stipend of $1 an hour to lead them, the after-school activities at Silas were limited to recreational tackle football, a bugle corps, and two dramatic productions. Bob Douglas frequently cited the opportunities for positive social interaction which these activities provided, and bemoaned the fact that there weren't more of them.

The Silver Seals Teachers, the Inclusion grant, and the history and structure of inclusion at Silas

Silas Middle School was organized into eight teams of approximately 120 students each for the 1993-94 school year. The sixth and seventh grades both had three teams, while the eighth grade had two. One team on each grade included LLD and Bilingual students, and as such was designated the "spotlight" team. The spotlight team for the eighth grade and the subject of this study, was called the "Silver Seals." The Silver Seals teachers had an average of 12.4 years of teaching experience, 9.5 of which had been accrued at Silas. They

consisted of Lisa Petrocelli (science), Cynthia Cook (social studies), Kathy Pettigrew (Special Education -SPED-) (all Anglo women); Doretha Jamison (English), and Carol Brooks (paraprofessional) (both African-American women); Andy Black (math) (an Anglo man); and Edgar Ramirez (Bilingual teacher) (a Puerto Rican man). The teachers spent more time on academic issues than many of the other teachers at Silas: They regularly stayed after school past the school committee-mandated time to grade homework, prepare classes, or work on other school-related projects. They wrote progress reports for their students every week which had to go home, be signed by the parent and brought back to school. They developed an elaborate incentive program to reward attendance and homework with material goods. All but the math and English teacher ate lunch together every day in a windowless converted custodian's room, during which their students' academic and social problems invariably were a focus of conversation. They all got together during the summer of 1993 to divide their incoming team of students into heterogeneously mixed classes.

The science, special education, and bilingual teachers, along with the principal, formed the school district's (and Silas's) Inclusion Team -- a state-grant-funded effort to

> ...provide opportunities for teachers to plan together and organize activities that will foster and facilitate an integrated educational environment for Bilingual, Chapter 1, and Special Education students (District Goals and Objectives 1993-94).

Edgar Ramirez described the goal of the program more simply to "break stereotypes." Lisa Petrocelli said it concerned "developing understanding of differences among people." Indeed, in the team's statement on desired learning outcomes for the 1993-94 school year, fully half of the eight outcomes were social, including: to listen courteously and discuss ideas; to understand and appreciate people of different cultures; to have a positive self-

concept and empathy towards others; and to understand and respect human dignity.

For 1993-94 the Silver Seals teachers adopted for the first time a "full Inclusion" model. Their students had experienced partial inclusion in the sixth and seventh grade. In the sixth grade the students in the Bilingual Program (henceforth referred to as Bilingual students, who were categorized in three levels based on increasing English language fluency, with level 3 designating the most advanced students) were in a separate classroom all day, and the Learning and Language Disabled (LLD) students were pulled out of the regular classroom for English, math, and reading. In the seventh grade the Bilingual students were integrated in homeroom and in the "encore" classes (metal and woodshop, music, art, gym); and the LLD students were all in one homeroom, but were integrated all day except for English, and academic reinforcement during the last period.

The major changes for 1993-94 were: 1) both the Bilingual and LLD students would be spread evenly across the four homerooms; 2) the Bilingual and LLD students would take part in all team activities (such as the homework/attendance incentive program); 3) the Bilingual and LLD students would have a skills class together; 4) the Bilingual teacher would teach a skills class to both Bilingual and regular education students; and 5) the Bilingual and regular education students would occasionally come together for integrated activities in social studies and math. (The city as a whole was not in compliance with Chapter 1 regulations due to a dearth of Chapter 1 teachers. The 18 Chapter 1 students on the team received only one special service: They were seen by a Chapter 1 reading teacher for their reading period. Otherwise, they were completely integrated.)

The 1993-94 Silver Seals

There were 126 students on the Silver Seals during at the beginning of the study. Of these 9 were LLD (all boys), and 18 were in the Bilingual Program. These numbers fluctuated slightly throughout the study period. Though 80 percent of the students on the team were on free or reduced lunch programs, almost all had brand-new sneakers on the first day of school. Spectacularly baggy pants was the most common look for both boys and girls. Fashion was important for the Silver Seals students, and it was suggestive of most of the student's primary reported motive for coming to school: seeing their friends. However, social interaction between students did not always have a positive cast at Silas. During the 1992-93 school year there had been a double rape in one of the bathrooms, and for the two years preceding it, there had been numerous fights between the Bilingual and regular education students.

Teacher Practice in the Inclusive classroom

For purposes of description, the practice of the Silver Seals teachers with regard to the goals of inclusion are divided into three broad categories: Prescriptive seating arrangements and integrated activities; teaching methods which were adapted to the individual needs of students; and statements made to students about mutual respect and understanding of difference.

All of the Silver Seals classroom teachers used prescriptive seating plans for their homerooms and academic classes. Lisa Petrocelli and Andy Black seated their students so they obtained an even distribution of gender, ethnic origin, and ability (although, as will be

discussed below, adherence to these guidelines varied greatly between them). Doretha Jamison seated her students on the basis of gender, and Cynthia Cook seated hers alphabetically (and thereby obtained her desired mix of ethnic origin, gender, and ability). All of the teachers also used cooperative learning groups to various extents throughout the study period. Lisa Petrocelli and Cynthia Cook explicitly made up these groups to be representative of ethnic origin, gender, and ability. Doretha Jamison made up hers on the basis of gender (she had no Bilingual or LLD students in her classes); Andy Black usually let his students make their own groups. In addition, the Bilingual students participated in several activities with the social studies classes which were specifically designed to enable students with varying levels of language proficiency to work together (such as group activities with diverse assignments for individual students). Finally, the Bilingual students staged a "Puerto Rican Heritage Day" in November, during which they decorated the hallway, distributed literature, brought in Puerto Rican food, and served lunch to the entire team.

There were many student-centered elements in the teachers' classroom instruction. They typically assigned students different roles in cooperative learning groups based on their abilities (jigsawing). Their tests had sections which demanded a variety of skills and knowledge, and usually had a take-home element as well as provisions for students who needed extra time. Occasionally, constructivist instructional techniques were used. All of the homeroom teachers devoted part of the last period of every day to a review of the homework due for each class. The SPED and classroom teachers employed a co-teaching model wherein the instruction was shared to various degrees, and both teachers gave

individual help to regular education and LLD students. The SPED teacher and the paraprofessional typically read test questions aloud for LLD students with reading challenges. In his Bilingual program classes, the Bilingual teacher used an immersion model where he usually lectured, gave instructions, and asked questions in English, and the students answered in Spanish. He gave individual help to students in Spanish when needed.

Finally, all of the teachers on the team made statements to the students in the classroom, in the hallways, at lunch and at recess which emphasized the importance of mutual respect and understanding of individual differences. These statements were an important part of the culture of respect which they attempted to create. Lisa Petrocelli said the teachers made these statements to deliberately offset attitudes their students brought with them from home (fieldnote and interview excerpts refer to all teachers by their initials),

> Because of the way we talk with the kids, and treat them, and make them understand it, that no one's better than the other. The hardest part is trying to get them to put aside what they learn in the home environment. That's why we call ourselves the Silas family (LP 3/17/94 p.2).

On the first day of school the Silver Seals teachers brought their students to the auditorium and aired some of their expectations for the year. The social studies teacher gave a welcome in English, then the Bilingual teacher gave the same welcome in Spanish. Edgar Ramirez then gave a short preview in English and Spanish of various team activities for the upcoming year, and said, "Let's share; let's be cooperative with each other, and let's learn from each other..." Earlier in the day, Edgar Ramirez circulated through the homerooms and said,

> I'm going to be monitoring the restroom this year. Remember, very important is the word respect. Respect yourself, respect your classmates, and respect your teachers (ER 9.8 p. 2).

Edgar himself had had particular problem in the last area in previous years -- regular education students frequently made fun of his accent, and told him he couldn't speak English properly. He was determined however, to make strides in this area. He felt it was particularly important for the Bilingual students to see him interacting effectively with the regular education students:

> If they see the figure that represents their shelter getting along with the regular students, and saying, "Yo, how you doin'" to the black students, then they know they can do it too. You're setting the example (ER 3.17 p.2)

The other teachers on the team elicited a tough love kind of approach to their interaction with students. They repeatedly intervened when they heard students derogating one another:

> (Math class) A Latino girl goes up to the board to do a problem. She asks a question to Mr. Black about the problem. A Latino boy in the class yells out, "You're illiterate." Mr. Black immediately says, "Stand up and apologize! Stand up and apologize like a gentleman (fieldnotes 9.22 p. 5).

As Lisa Petrocelli told her students in her first science class, "I can be as sweet as they come and I can be as mean as they come." The emphasis on teacher respect was made startlingly clear two weeks later during her reading class:

> (Reading) LP just caught Alberto calling her a bitch under his breath as she walked by (probably to impress Jason across from him). LP stops and raises the two video tapes in her hand (while KP is addressing the class), and says, "Mrs. Pettigrew, may I interrupt you for a second?" "Yes." "Alberto just called me a bitch and I want to see if he can spell it." There is silence in the classroom. "Sorry", mumbles Alberto, "I didn't even say it." "YOU SAID IT!" says LP (more silence). "I want an apology, and I want you to spell it." "Sorry." "Now spell it." Silence. "Spell it!" Slowly and softly, "b-i-t-c-h." "Good." LP walks away, saying under her breath, "call me a bitch... (fieldnotes 9.22 p.9)."

Six months later, while I was interviewing Lisa Petrocelli, Alberto stood up from his seat in

the front row and with a small embarrassed smile on his face, ambled over and handed her a long-stemmed green carnation -it was St. Patrick's day-. "Why thank you, Alberto," said Lisa, smiling. These episodes typify how the Silver Seals teachers attempted to create a culture of respect for others through the use of inclusive teaching environments, student-centered instruction, and explicit interventions in instances of student disrespect for both teachers and other students.

Interaction between regular education and special needs students

In the following sections, three types of data are presented to relate critical features of the Silver Seals' peer relations. First, fieldnotes and interview data are used to describe student interaction in three different school contexts: 1) the Inclusive classroom; 2) the non-Inclusive classroom, the hallway, and recess; and 3) lunch. Second, a composite of seven student-derived indigenous typologies of the Silver Seals' peer system is presented and discussed. Finally, general student interview comments concerning perceptions of special needs, Bilingual, and regular education students are presented to elaborate these data.

A contextual model of student interaction with unlike peers

This section describes three qualitatively different contexts in which students on the Silver Seals conducted their social life and negotiated their group identities. The contexts are distinguished by the varying degrees to which environmental features determined whom students could interact with. The first context, the Inclusive classroom with its prescribed seating arrangements and teacher statements which encourage mutual respect, allowed for the

least student-control over interaction. The second context, the Silver Seals' hallway, the 10-15 minute recess period after lunch, and classes (such as encore) wherein teachers either did not use prescriptive seating arrangements or did not intervene during episodes of special needs student derogation, allowed for student control of interaction with minimal environmental constraint. The third context, lunch, allowed for student-control over interaction in a forced-choice setting in which students could sit at any one of 15 large tables. Students in this last context routinely sorted themselves into groups based first on gender, second on primary language, and third on ethnic origin.

Context 1: Student interaction in the inclusive classroom

Regular education and LLD students

Regular education and LLD students had both negative and positive interactions in their integrated classes. The negative comments of regular education students converged around two issues: 1) LLD students often took up too much time in the classroom, usually for eliciting inappropriate behaviors, and 2) they frequently received preferential treatment from the teachers. Typically, the time-wasting complaints were directed at one or two LLD students, most often at Devon (a thin African-American boy):

> (Math) A little conflict between Bruce (a big Anglo boy) and Devon: Bruce is sitting in front of Devon, who had already been reprimanded by Mr. Black for not having his book. A few minutes into the teacher's lesson Bruce gets up and exclaims, "I'm tired of Devon's little chatter!" He takes a few steps down the aisle towards the front of the room, then Devon says something I can't hear, and Bruce goes back, crosses behind Devon's desk, and gives him a solid shove. KP, sitting at her desk in the front of the class, fumes, and yells, "Siddown Bruce!" (fieldnotes 10.12 p.2).

Some regular education students cited certain LLD students' struggles with reading as holding up a class when they were asked to read aloud. Others mentioned LLD students' frequent talking:

> They always talk -- they always waste your time. You have to be like the last ones out for lunch and everything cuz they're always talking with their friends and everything (SI 5 p. 17).

Preferential treatment by teachers was a concern voiced by roughly half of the students interviewed. They frequently said, for example, that while they were sent down to the principal's office for repeatedly chewing gum in class, the LLD students were simply told to throw it away and not do it again. In addition, there was an instance in which two LLD boys had a minor fight, after which they were sent to mediation. Three different regular education students said that if it had been them, they would have gotten in-house suspension. Occasionally these concerns were visible during class, as teachers often called on the LLD students when they had their hands raised:

> (Social studies) CC asks a question about the previous night's homework assignment from the textbook, and pauses. Jacqueline (a Puerto Rican girl) raises her hand while Jim (an Anglo LLD boy) gets up from his desk next to her and, carrying his book, goes up to the front of the room to throw something in the trash. On his way back, he opens his book. Jacqueline, her hand still up, waiting to be called on, says vindictively to Jim, "Don't start looking in no book, copying me boy." JB sits down and puts up his hand. "Put your hand down," Jacqueline hisses.

However, a great deal of cooperation between regular education and LLD students was also observed. One day in social studies, Jacqueline took ten minutes to go through Devon's notebook with him, telling what he did and didn't have in it. Frequently, regular education and LLD students helped each other in cooperative learning groups:

> (Social studies) KP asks Melanie (a Latino girl) to help Ned (an Anglo LLD boy), who is sitting across from her in their group, with the worksheet. Melanie looks up and says, "Help Ned? Yeah, I'll help him." Ned looks somewhat pleadingly at KP, mumbling something which sounds like he wants her to help him. "Siddown and shuddup," says Melanie, "I'm gonna help you" (fieldnotes CC 11.2 p.4).

Which she did. Moreover, several regular education students empathized with what they conceived to be the difficulties encountered by the LLD students in the regular classroom. They mentioned how frustrating it must be for them to get the help they needed in such overcrowded classes. Another student pointed out that,

> You gotta be careful what you say around them, like if you call someone stupid they might take it the wrong way. (Your teachers might) take points off your score (SI 3 p.5).

Indeed, all of the regular education students interviewed said they thought the LLD students should be in with them for at least some of their classes.

Regular education and Bilingual students

No negative interactions were observed between Bilingual students and either regular education or LLD students during classes for the entire study period. There were, however, several instances of regular education students helping out Bilingual students, especially during encore classes such as gym and music:

> (Gym, outside) In preparation for the football pass-catching drill, Mr. Nichols divides his "squad" into four groups, and aligns them behind four cones. Grisela (level 1 Bilingual girl) doesn't appear to understand however, and is left standing in front of the cones rather than behind them in the lines of other students. Vanessa (a corpulent and much-picked-on Anglo girl) says from the front of one of the lines in a hushed urgent voice, "Grisela, Grisela." Grisela looks back, and Vanessa points to the end of one of the lines. Grisela hurries over (fieldnotes 9.22 p.2).

A regular education student commented on this kind of situation,

> One thing I don't think is fair is when we go to encore and stuff like music class and stuff, we don't have a bilingual teacher there, they only speak English, so the Bilingual kids don't even know what they're talking about and I feel they might feel left out because they don't know what they're doing (SI 4 p.7).

Virtually all of the regular education students interviewed approved of having classes with the Bilingual students. While a few said, "we don't hardly notice 'em," others commented that they liked it when the Bilingual students taught them words in Spanish.

Bilingual and LLD students

Bilingual students were observed helping out LLD students, especially during the skills/self-esteem class they had together:

> (Self-Esteem) Four of the five LLD students who are here today are seated next to a bilingual student (as per ER and KP's wishes). Devon however, is seated by himself towards the back of the room. For the first five minutes of class, while ER and KP give an introduction to the day's activity (watching a video), Devon is sitting at his desk, loudly trying to pound the slightly protruding drawer of his desk all the way in to it. Bam! Bam! The noise is very loud. He appears to be oblivious of the activity at the front of the room. His classmates make no comments about him, and none look back at him. Right before the video starts, a Bilingual girl sitting alone at the front of the class asks ER in Spanish to ask Devon if he wants to come up to the front of the room and sit next to her. ER comes back to Devon and asks him if he wants to. Devon lumbers up to the front of the room (fieldnotes 2.1 p.3).

LLD students reported that they enjoyed having class with the Bilingual students. They particularly liked learning about Puerto Rico, and answering questions about their own city.

Context 2: Non-Inclusive classes, the hallway, and recess

This context was characterized by fewer environmental constraints on student interactions. The non-Inclusive classes considered in this context were not a static set: rather they consisted of periods of time (usually in encore classes, and sometimes in academic classes and homerooms) when teachers did not use prescribed seating arrangements, and did not intervene during episodes of student derogation. The Silver Seals' classrooms were all on one hallway, and the day was organized so that there were 10 minute homeroom periods at two points during the academic schedule when students could go to the bathroom and their lockers. These time periods offered short opportunities to socialize with students from other homerooms. Weather permitting, recess occurred during the last 10-15 minutes of lunch on the blacktop apron and soccer field out the cafeteria doors behind the school.

At the beginning of the school year many of the LLD students encountered difficult social situations in certain classes. Regular education students occasionally called them "boy" in a derogatory tone, refused to sit next to them, and called them names. The LLD students often clustered together in settings with little teacher presence. As the school year progressed however, these incidents diminished in frequency. Indeed, the one homeroom in which a noticeable amount of LLD student derogation persisted, was one in which the teacher had ceased to enforce his prescriptive seating arrangement, and had diminished the frequency of his verbal interventions. By February all five of the bilingual students in his classroom were clustered in a back corner, and the two LLD students were seated at desks in the very front row -- seemingly seeking his shelter. Both wanted to be moved to Lisa Petrocelli's homeroom, and, after much gentle prodding, one mentioned his main reason as

being called "foureyes" by some of the students in the room.

Generally, the LLD students and regular education students got along very well outside of the prescriptive classroom. However, especially at the beginning of the year, the Anglo LLD students tended to cluster together on the way to their classes and lunch, and at recess. Devon and Felton (an African-American LLD student who was later placed in special needs-only school) consistently demonstrated socially inappropriate behaviors which occasionally led to student complaints. The paraprofessional was once overheard in the hallway after urging Devon away from another student, "you always have your hands on somebody." When asked if she hung out with the LLD students in the hallway, Jacqueline was effusive:

> No, cuz they always like flirting and touching other people's butt. See... Felton , what happens is, like when I walk by Felton, Felton's always looking at my breasts, and he's like, like and then he says, "Oh, am I gonna get some tonight?" and everything and you know that's ruining my reputation. You know I got a good reputation I think, you know... (SI 5 p.16).

However, these tendencies diminished somewhat as the year progressed (and after Felton was moved to a separate facility), and positive social interactions were more the norm:

> (Hallway) Steven (African-American regular education boy) and I are walking down the hall talking. Ned (Anglo LLD boy) approaches from the other direction, returning from the bathroom. Ned raises his left hand as we approach and I think he is waving at me. But Steven casually raises his left hand as Ned passes and they gently slap a high five. "Yo," says Ned. "Yo man," says Steven quietly (fieldnotes 11.10 p.3).

Since they had most of their classes in Mr. Reyes' room the Bilingual students did not pass frequently in the hallways with the other students. When they did, no conflicts of any kind were observed during the study period. The Puerto Rican Heritage day gave the

Bilingual students the chance to show the other students elements of their culture (and most directly, their food), which they did enthusiastically:

> (Hallway) Ned and Jim (both Anglo LLD boys) go through the line in succession. Ned takes some pork from Edwin (Bilingual boy), but doesn't see (or doesn't want food from) Raul, a bigger Bilingual boy slightly behind him. Ned takes about five steps towards the next booth, when Raul says loudly, "Yo, Yo!" to him. Ned looks up, around, then comes back, and Raul gives him some of the white potato-like salad he is dishing out. Jim also gets some (fieldnotes 11.24 p.4).

Bilingual students were also sociable with the researcher during Puerto Rican Heritage day:

> (Bilingual classroom) Edgar Ramirez directs me to eat in his classroom, and we sit down at the front near his desk. He is very pleased with how it has gone so far. A Bilingual girl comes up beside me and asks me in English how I like the food, and I say it's delicious. "See that?" Edgar says when she leaves, "two, three years ago, a Bilingual student would never have had the confidence to talk with a white teacher like that (fieldnotes 11.24 p.5).

Though Edgar Ramirez had feared that some of the regular education students would try to disrupt it, the event went well. The only negative occurrence observed by the researcher was when an African-American boy refused one of the Bilingual student-made bookmarks handed out by Mr. Ramirez. For the most part, the bilingual boys and, to a greater extent, the bilingual girls tended to cluster together in both the hallways and at recess. Significantly, the researcher learned of no fights between regular education and Bilingual students during the study period.

Context 3: Lunch

At lunchtime the Silver Seals invariably sorted themselves into groups based on ascribed characteristics. There were 5 20' long tables extending from opposite walls in the cafeteria. Two 40' long tables ran perpendicular to these tables, down the center of the

room. Finally five 6' round tables were lined up on one wall. Students ate at the same table or area of tables almost every day of the study period. The lunchtime groupings seemed to be based first on gender, second on primary language, and third on ethnic origin. In general, girls ate at the five long tables along one wall, while boys (including two African-American and one Anglo LLD student) ate at the five long tables along the opposite wall. The middle tables were occupied by a mix of lower status male and female African-American, Latino, and Anglo students and a few Anglo LLD students. In addition, the Bilingual girls always ate at the end of one of the middle long tables, while the Bilingual boys floated around more, and ate occasionally with some of the Puerto Rican boys. One African-American girl explained,

> Certain people when we go to lunch hang out in different spots. The caucasian people are prejudice, go way over there and the in-betweeners just stay right there (in the middle) ....Not all separated, but you know like some people like most people like to stick to what they are (SI 3 p.3).

A Puerto Rican boy however, emphasized the porous nature of the group borders:

> Here you can sit anywhere you want. It's just where we're used to sitting... They eat lunch over there, but then when we go outside we hang together... We all know each other; we know everyone on the team... There's not any groups, cuz most of us hang out together. It's not like Tisdale (another middle school in Midway)(STR 2.18 p.1).

Indeed a great deal of circulation of students between groups (especially among the boys) was routinely observed once the students had finished eating, and especially once they went outside for recess. In order to explore more concretely where the Bilingual and LLD students fit into the Silver Seals peer system, selected students were asked to generate typologies of their teams' peer groups and to list their members.

Indigenous typologies of the Silver Seals peer system

A modified version of the Social Type Rating (STR) scale was used to generate typologies of student peer affiliations (Schwendinger and Schwendinger 1985; Brown 1993). The Silver Seals teachers nominated seven students whom they felt were either leaders or leading examples of what they perceived to be the peer groups on the team. In individual sessions, these students, with a friend of their choosing, were asked to identify by name all the different peer groups on the team -- and, if the groups had no names, to generate descriptors for them. The students were then given a roster of all the students on the team, and asked to place each student in one of the groups they had identified. The student-raters made "outsider" categories for students who tended to hang out on their own, and left students whom they did not know off their lists.

The appendix to this paper consists of a composite typology which was generated from these seven schemes for display purposes. It was constructed by noting and consolidating broad patterns of similarity in both the names of peer groups and their membership. Student names were substituted with designations for type of educational program (regular education, Bilingual Program, or Learning and Language Disabled), and gender.

Findings:

1) The composite student-rater typology mirrors almost exactly the lunchtime seating arrangements observed during the study period. This finding attests to the validity of the typologies in regard to their relation to actual student social life.

2) Five out of the seven pairs of student raters commented at the beginning of the rating sessions that it was difficult to put students into groups because of the fact that "we all hang out together" -- or more specifically, as mentioned above, that after hanging out with the people in these groups at lunch, they go outside and socialize with other people: "We hang out with these people at lunch, but then we all go outside to hang out together." This sentiment was visible in the student typologies when some students were assigned to different crowds by different raters. This evidence concurs with Brown's (1993) finding that junior high school students tend to draw their friends from several crowds; and Kinney's (1992) observations on the looseness of middle school peer associations.

3) Most significantly perhaps, none of the student raters delineated a separate category for the LLD students. Rather, the LLD students were put in regular education peer groups ranging in status from the "Florida St. Posse / Four Horsemen" to the "White boys / Nerds / Bratty Kids / Nobody Crew / Wannabees".

4) While for the most part the Bilingual boys and the Bilingual girls were rated in their own groups, students from each turned up in other peer groups. Importantly, during the student rating sessions, there were only a few derogatory comments made about the Bilingual students; these were mostly made by regular education Puerto Rican girls about Bilingual Program girls.

5) Gender was the most salient predictor of peer group membership, especially in the more high status groups (the groups with recognized names). Gender-mixed groups were more visible in the "outsider/lonely people" category, where, for example Vanessa Hornblower appeared with Joe Rangley (an Anglo LLD boy, who several of his teachers felt had overtly racist attitudes).

Discussion: Perceptions of LLD and Bilingual students and their peer relations

This final section discusses these last three findings with regard to general interview data concerning relationships between special needs students and their peers. Comments made by regular education and Bilingual students indicated that they had a humanistic, and often friendly disposition, towards the LLD students. For example, when the first group of students interviewed were asked what it was like to be in classes with students with learning disabilities, their responses were for the most part unfavorable, saying that "some people won't accept it." After several more negative comments were made, the interviewer realized that the students were referring to the transitionally mentally handicapped students in a substantially separate classroom across the hall. When the interviewer mentioned some of the LLD students by name, one Puerto Rican girl exclaimed, "Oh wow! Right, those are my buddies. They cool. They alright." The other students voiced their agreement.

An African-American boy, who at one point during the study period was suspended for sexually molesting a girl, twice referred to the LLD students as "gay." However, the vast majority of the regular education students described them more positively:

They're smart, but they just play around too long (SI 1 p.7).

> It's not -- they not different from nobody else, they just need special help (SI 4 p.9).
>
> I didn't know Ned and Jim had learning disabilities... I didn't know that, I thought they were like, smart kids (SI 6 p.25).

Furthermore, when the regular education students were asked whether they thought the LLD students ought to be in a separate classroom for the entire day, all 32 regular education students interviewed said no. Many commented about inclusion that, "I'm not bothered by it," or "It's the same." Several others made more empathetic remarks:

> I don't know because, you know, it's not hurting us but it might hurt them. You know, maybe they want to be with their friends or something (SI 5 p.16).
>
> ...I think they shouldn't because if I was in that class and they told me I couldn't be in the other class no more, I would be mad because I would like to be with my friends. They should act different, that's the only thing (SI 5 p.17).
>
> No, cuz then they would feel stupid or something, I don't know. It wouldn't make them feel right. It would make them feel they're not worthy to be around anybody else. It's like, when they're around us, they can learn a little. When we work in groups, they can learn a little (SI 7 p.4)
>
> No. Because they are people, they got the same rights we do. Yeah, we're the same (SI 8 p.6).

The LLD students themselves generally approved of inclusion. Though in the beginning of the year several of them were apprehensive about the new arrangement, particularly being spread over the four homerooms, by mid-winter they were quite positive about it. When asked what they liked most about coming to school, two of the Anglo LLD students mentioned first their friends. And when one was asked who his friends were, he said, "Marcus, Billy, Jorge, Javier (all regular education students), do you want me to say them all? (SI 9 p.1)."

Most of the regular education students made either noncommittal or positive comments on what it was like to be in school with the Bilingual students. There were, however, tensions and occasionally minor conflicts between three groups of girls: One mostly African-American regular education, another mostly Puerto Rican regular education, and the third, the Bilingual Program girls. Interviewees from these groups explained that the tensions generally had to do with relationships with boys:

> There's like this thing that's going on that, I'm not racist but, the black girls and the Puerto Rican girls? They aren't getting along, right? ... It's just that the guys, cuz stuff happens with guys, and then we get mad, then we get jealous, so then we want to fight. So that's what's going on, so some girls are jealous. (Puerto Rican regular education student SI 1 p.5).

Tensions between the Puerto Rican regular education students and the Bilingual students were also strained by jealousies over boys. As the Bilingual teacher explained,

> Girls at this age, no matter what, they're going to be jealous of each other. A couple of the bilingual girls are very pretty. They have dark hair, green eyes, and a nice body... It's not an issue of ethnicity, it is an issue of jealousy (ER 3.17 p.2).

A Puerto Rican regular education girl exclaimed,

> There's one thing about Bilinguals I don't like, especially their whispering. They're conceited. They think they're IT! They're conceited, they think they're bad. They talk about people (SI 5 p.12).

Another source of jealousy was that many of the Puerto Rican regular education girls felt it was unfair that they were not allowed to speak Spanish in their classes, while the Bilingual girls were.

However, most of the students interviewed (and all the male students interviewed) reported that they got along with the Bilingual students. "They're just people," said one Puerto Rican boy. An African-American boy reported, "I live in like a Spanish

neighborhood, it's like that. I'm with them. We hang." All of the students interviewed approved of having the Bilingual students in their homerooms, in their encore classes, and, in general, on the team. One Anglo regular education girl said,

> You don't know what they're saying, but you can join in the conversation anyway. You know what I'm talking about... It's fulfilling, you get to know other places and stuff. Like journeying off to another world (SI 3 p.3).

A Puerto Rican girl said,

> I can't complain, some of those girls kick the ball better than us in gym and everything, so I don't care. They're my heritage right? They're Puerto Rican.

The Bilingual students interviewed reported that they got along "with everybody," and that they approved of Inclusion. Again, perhaps the best measure of the social climate between the Bilingual and regular education students was the absence of fights which had occurred frequently in previous years.

A note on gender

The regularity with which the Silver Seals sorted themselves by gender, both during the school day and in the student-rater typologies, deserves brief attention. As mentioned above, lunchtime seating groups were almost invariably gender-exclusive. There were also an enormous number of gender-sorting events in the encore classes, in the hallway, and, to a lesser extent, at recess. For example, whenever Mr. Black's homeroom lined up outside their classroom to go to lunch, the boys and girls almost always voluntarily formed gender-exclusive lines. Students regularly formed gender-exclusive groups when given the chance by their teachers.

The gym teachers regularly divided their classes into gendered groups. During the winter for example, the boys and girls played separate games of basketball in a divided gym. Moreover, the one male out of the three gym teachers (all Anglo) often made statements to the boys such as this one during the first class of the year while the boys were waiting for the girls to emerge from their locker room: "The girls are going to be up, as always, a couple of minutes late." He added a little later that "you're going to have to be patient with girls that aren't as athletically gifted as you." Finally, in the boys locker room, he said,

> It's nice to have you eighth graders here. You're more responsible. You guys are young men now, and it's a pleasure to be in the locker room with you (fieldnotes 9.14 p.2).

Gender seemed to be an extremely important descriptor of difference for the Silver Seals students. When the interviewer commented on the gender-specific activities in gym class, one regular education boy said about the girls,

> They don't play. They're just like different. They just like fooling around. They play by themselves (SI 6 p.1).

Indeed, when asked what is was like to be in school with the Bilingual students, one regular education boy said simply, "some of those girls look good." When asked the same question, another regular education boy immediately engaged his buddy next to him in a secretive discussion of one of the Bilingual girl's bodies. The seriousness of the gender issue was underscored when the first of this second pair of students along with another student were suspended from school for a week for molesting three girls in art class.

Effects of inclusion on relationships between special needs and regular education students: Teacher comments

The Silver Seals teachers felt that inclusion had a great deal to do with the positive social climate between regular education and special needs students. Cynthia Cook said,

> I think it IS the inclusion. They used to say "them" across the hall (referring to the bilingual students in their separate classroom). I think the mixing has contributed... Now, as a rule it's "Paul is wierd." It doesn't matter if he's white, black, or Hispanic, it's he's "wierd" (CC 3.17 p.5).

When asked how much of the improved climate between regular education and Bilingual students could be attributed to inclusion, Lisa Petrocelli said,

> Probably about 50%... I think in the end run, yeah, these arrangements have something to do with social tolerance. There's always gonna be people you don't like. But you gotta learn to work with them. You know, you can bitch all you want, but you gotta learn how to work with people you don't like. I won't move 'em unless I hear from the parents (LP 3.17 p.3).

Kathy Pettigrew was effusive when asked whether she felt inclusion helped the social relationships between LLD and regular students:

> Absolutely, absolutely. It enhances their social growth. Other kids act as models, so they can see more appropriate behavior (KP 3.17 p.4).

Bob Douglas said that he noticed a difference in the behavior of the students on the two eighth grade teams:

> On the eight grade spotlight team, you can see it in something as mundane as passing in the halls. Their interpersonal skills towards each other -- the Inclusion children are more tolerant... I've seen a minimizing in what an adult would call hate crime. In terms of picking on a person because of their race, gender, ability. In terms of someone bumping into somebody in the cafeteria or on the bus... A conscious effort has been successful in the tools of inclusion, as evidenced by the students' interpersonal skills (BD 2.15 p.1).

Conclusions

This study described three broad dynamics in the relationships between special needs students and their peers. First, although the LLD students were criticized by regular education students for wasting time in class, receiving preferential treatment from teachers, and eliciting inappropriate social behaviors, they were almost completely integrated into the Silver Seals peer system. Second, in spite of tensions between regular education Puerto Rican, African-American, and Bilingual girls, relations between regular education and Bilingual students exhibited none of the physical conflict which had been extant in previous years. Finally, gender appeared to be more important than primary language, ability, or ethnic origin in determining peer groups.

The findings regarding the importance of gender (and to a lesser extent primary language) in peer group membership concur with research on the salience of like characteristics in Western adolescent group identity formation. However, the STR data and interview comments indicated that students generally demonstrated a humanistic regard for each other. The team teachers and the school principal attributed much of their students' positive peer relations to their prescriptive grouping arrangements, instructional adaptations, and statements concerning respect for individual differences. This research suggests that inclusive teaching practices seemed have a positive effect on relationships between special needs students and their peers.

COMPOSITE TYPOLOGY OF THE SILVER SEALS PEER SYSTEM

WHITE GIRLS GOOD GIRLS SMART KIDS GROUP	FRESH GIRLS BAD GIRLS DA STUPID HOES BLACK GIRLS TECH CREW	DA GANGSTA BITCHES SPICS BIG MOUTHS RICANS	BILINGUAL GIRLS SPAIN 4 BILINGUALS RICANS	WHITE BOYS NERDS BRATTY KIDS NOBODY CREW WANNABES	BRISTOL TOUGH GUYS	FLORIDA ST. POSSE THE CREW BAD BOYS 4 HORSEMAN	SPAIN CREW RICANS BILINGUALS COLLADOS REVOLTOSOS	LONERS LONELY PEOPLE PEOPLE THAT BE BY THEY SELF LOST PEOPLE
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
REG - F	REG - F	REG - F	BIL - F	LLD - M	REG - M	REG - M	BIL - M	REG - F
REG - F	REG - F	REG - F	BIL - F	REG - M	REG - M	REG - M	REG - M	LLD - M
REG - F	REG - F	REG - F	BIL - F	REG - M	REG - M	LLD - M	BIL - M	REG - F
REG - F	REG - F	REG - F	BIL - F	REG - M	REG - M	REG - M	BIL - M	REG - M
REG - F	REG - F	REG - F	BIL - F	REG - M	REG - M	REG - M	BIL - M	REG - F
REG - F	REG - F	REG - F	BIL - F	LLD - M	REG - M	LLD - M	BIL - M	REG - M
REG - F	REG - F	REG - F	REG - F	REG - M	REG - M	REG - M	REG - M	REG - M
REG - F		REG - F	BIL - F	REG - M	REG - M	REG - M	BIL - M	
REG - F		REG - F	BIL - F	REG - M	REG - M	LLD - M		
REG - F		BIL - F	BIL - F	REG - M	LLD - M	REG - M		
		BIL - F		REG - M	REG - M	REG - M		
				REG - M	REG - M			
				REG - M				

KEY

REG = REGULAR EDUCATION
BIL = BILINGUAL PROGRAM
LLD = LEARNING & LANGUAGE DISABLED
F = FEMALE
M = MALE

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